

Israeli Antiterror Aide Reportedly Had 2 Jobs

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 — The senior Israeli counterterrorism official who purportedly ran an espionage operation in Washington was also a top official in an agency that collected scientific data, Israeli sources said today.

In describing the findings of an Israeli investigation of the espionage case, a highly placed Israeli source said earlier in the week that the counterterrorism official used two Israeli science attachés based in the United States as local contacts with an American Navy employee, Jonathan Jay Pollard. Mr. Pollard has been charged with espionage.

Despite one official statement and a flood of authorized leaks of information suggesting that none of Israel's political leaders were involved in the Pollard affair or had any prior knowledge of it, a gnawing doubt and sense of incredulity is creeping into Israeli newspaper headlines and editorials. Several have called for a public accounting by the Government.

According to an Israeli source, the unidentified counterterrorism official "running" Mr. Pollard "wore two hats."

Two Functions Alleged

Under one hat he was the Prime Minister's adviser on terrorism, the source said. Under another, he was a top official of a little-known office in the Israeli Defense Ministry for the collection of scientific data. According to foreign press accounts, the office is called Lekem, its Hebrew acronym.

Lekem is in charge of gathering scientific data from "open sources" around the world, according to press reports. It dates back to the early years of the state of Israel, when the country was badly in need of scientific development.

Although it is in the Defense Ministry, Lekem usually nominates the scientific attachés who serve in Israeli embassies. Those designated to go abroad do so as scientific representatives of the Foreign Ministry, and they report through normal Foreign Ministry channels, Israeli sources said.

The two Israeli diplomats who were suddenly recalled last week because of their alleged involvement in the Pollard affair were both affiliated with Lekem, Government sources said. The two were Ilan Ravid, the deputy science attaché in the Washington embassy, and Yosef Yagur, consul for scientific affairs at the Israeli consulate in New York, Israeli Government sources have said.

F.B.I. Role Envisioned

A senior Israeli official said that although Israel would not accede to an American request to have the two diplomats return to Washington for questioning, it might allow an official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to speak with them here, provided

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mutually satisfactory ground rules can be established.

Later today in Washington, the State Department expressed dismay that it was not notified before the two diplomats returned to Israel and "regret" at the "delay" in promised cooperation. Because of the Sabbath, there was no immediate comment from Israeli officials.

The purported connection between the counterterrorism official and Lekem might explain several anomalies about the Pollard affair.

To begin with, the two Israeli diplomats were apparently called back home very suddenly, outside the normal Foreign Ministry channels, and without the knowledge of the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, Meir Rosenne. After Mr. Rosenne met Wednesday with Deputy Secretary of State Michael Armacost, he told reporters, "Nobody has left."

Possible Explanations

Second, it explains why the Israeli investigation purportedly found that the counterterrorism official had Mr. Pollard report to him through the two scientific attachés.

Third, it adds plausibility to the official Israeli Government contention that the counterterrorism official passed on much of the information he obtained from Mr. Pollard to the general Israeli intelligence community without raising any suspicion in either the Ministry of Defense or the various intelligence branches. Because of his connections with Lekem, the official was apparently a regular contributor of information to the Israeli intelligence community.

From the very beginning, too, Israeli intelligence experts have argued that the Mossad, Israel's highly respected foreign intelligence arm, would never have got involved with someone as seemingly amateurish and unprofessional as Mr. Pollard, aside from the fact that the Mossad is under strict orders not to involve itself in active espionage in the United States.

Israeli newspapers have identified Rafi Eitan as the senior counterterrorism official involved in the Pollard case. Mr. Eitan formerly served as the adviser on terrorism to Prime Ministers Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. Mr. Eitan has said that any connection of his name with the Pollard affair was "a mistake."

Mr. Eitan left his job as adviser on terrorism in September 1984 after Shimon Peres took over as Prime Minister. Since then, Mr. Eitan has remained on the Government payroll in an undisclosed capacity, Israeli sources said.

Attitude of Israeli Public

The public's attitude toward the case was probably best summed up by the Dry Bones cartoon strip in today's Jerusalem Post, in which one man says to another: "Did we really do it? And if we did do it, what exactly did we do? And why did we do it? If we did it? And if we did do it, what will they do? I tell you, this spy scandal is a case for Solomon."

The other man answers, "Or a commission of inquiry."

Israel's national unity cabinet led by Prime Minister Peres, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin has declined to appoint an independent commission of inquiry to look into the spy scandal and has yet to provide any public explanation for what happened.

The entire investigation has been handled personally by Mr. Peres, Mr. Shamir and Mr. Rabin, who have been meeting regularly for the last week.

Their preliminary report, which has been conveyed privately to the United States, found that the senior counterterrorism official responsible for the Pollard affair acted without the knowledge or approval of anyone in the political echelon.

Skepticism About Inquiry

Political commentators have noted that it is precisely the three men carrying out the internal inquiry — Mr. Peres, Mr. Shamir and Mr. Rabin — who would have the most to lose from any other conclusion.

Mr. Shamir was the Prime Minister when the Pollard affair began in the spring of 1984. Mr. Peres was the Prime Minister when it came to light last week, and Mr. Rabin was the Defense Minister when most of the information obtained through Mr. Pollard found its way into Israeli intelligence channels.

"This matter cuts across party lines," said a senior Government source. "Peres, Shamir and Rabin know that if they start pointing fingers at each other, everyone will lose."

The Israeli press, however, is becoming increasingly vocal in demanding a public accounting of how such a thing could happen.

Eight days "have already elapsed since the affair exploded," wrote Maariv, the mass circulation daily. "It is hard to go on hiding behind the claim that the affair is being investigated."

The Jerusalem Post observed: "Either the elected officials, from the Prime Minister's office on down, did not know what was happening — in which case they were horrendously derelict — or they did know, and in that case were horrendously reckless. In either instance they do not come out well."